

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 624
By Harper

A RESOLUTION to urge the Tennessee Historical Commission to place a historical marker at the former homeplace of noted sculptor William Edmondson.

WHEREAS, Tennessee residents and the members of the Tennessee General Assembly are very proud that our state is a cultural center for both music and art; and

WHEREAS, the late William Edmondson (1874-1951), a lifelong Nashvillian, was one of the greatest and most renown artists of the twentieth century. One of five children born to former slaves, Orange and Jane Edmondson, William Edmondson received no formal education and traveled only as far as Memphis in his lifetime, but the works of his hands have seen the lights of New York City and have crossed the ocean to Paris, France; and

WHEREAS, inspired by God, Mr. Edmondson created noble sculptures that are now widely sought by museums and collectors; and.

WHEREAS, though his creative period only lasted from 1934-48, Mr. Edmondson produced hundreds of works during that time, and sold most of them for a few dollars; today, his sculptures command six figures and can be found in the Museum of Modern Art, the National

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Museum of American Art at the Smithsonian, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center; and

WHEREAS, in 1937, this humble man became the first African American artist to be featured in a one-man exhibit at the American Museum of Modern Art, in New York City; and

WHEREAS, proclaimed as the greatest folk-art carver of his time and among the greatest American sculptors, trained or untrained, of the last hundred years, the late Mr. Edmondson owned a brick bungalow at 1434 14th Avenue South, in what is now the Belmont - Edgehill area of Nashville, the house was razed and where it once stood, the Murrell School and playground currently stand in its place; and

WHEREAS, a much-awaited, full-scale retrospective tour, marking the national premiere of his work, opened on January 28 at the Cheekwood Museum of Art in Nashville and is scheduled to run through April 23, 2000; and

WHEREAS, the exhibit will also travel to the American Museum of Folk Art, the Memorial Art Gallery at the University of Rochester, the High Museum of Art's Folk Art and Photography Galleries in Atlanta, and the Mennello Museum of American Folk Art in Orlando, Florida; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the site of Mr. Edmondson's former home be specially recognized with a Tennessee historical marker recognizing the rich heritage and bountiful works of his God-given talent in the art of sculpting; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we strongly urge the Tennessee Historical Commission to erect a Tennessee historical marker at 1434 14th Avenue South in Nashville to designate the site of the former home of William Edmondson, with the goal of preserving the memory of his numerous artistic accomplishments and tremendous contribution to modern art.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an enrolled copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Tennessee Historical Commission.

